THE Most difficult DUTY made Easy:

Or, Directions to bring our Hearts to Forgive our Enemies.

By *D. B.* Minister of the Gospel.

The strict Precept of Loving, and Blessing, and Praying for Enemies, is more clearly perceptive; and so, more indispensably obligatory to us Christians, than ever it was to the Jews before.

Dr. H. Hammond *Serm. on* Luke 9. 55.

What Christian soever can indulge himself the enjoyment of that hellish Sensuality of Revenge; nay, that doth not practise the high, but necessary Perfection of overcoming Evil with Good, he knows not what Spirit he is of. Id. ibid.

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S. *Woodford*, in Paraph. *Pſ.* 35.

FAlſe Witneſſes did up againſt me riſe,
With charge of Crimes I never knew:
My good Deeds anſwer'd with Indignities,
And to the Death my Soul did cloſe purſue.
Thoſe for whoſe Griefs I truly mourn'd,
And pray'd for, ſick, tho on my ſelf the Pray'rs return'd.
For my beſt Friend I could have done no more,
Not more, had he my Brother been;
I did as heartily his Loſs deplore,
As if I then my Mother's Grave had ſeen.
Tho in my Troubles they rejoice,
And all my Griefs outbrave with their inſulting Voice.

The most difficult Duty made Easy:

OR,

The Question Resolved, *How we may bring our Hearts to Forgive our Enemies?*

THE Law of *Kindness* seems Repealed among us. Giving *Love*, and Forgiving, both are Exiles, banished out of our *Christendom*. Their Contraries do every where reign and tyrannize. *Bitterness* and *Wrath* fill every Place; and *there's nothing hid from the Heat thereof.* No; *nor is there any Speech or Language, wherein their Voice is not heard.* Every Man is a *Rehoboam*, and answers *Roughly*; *Nabal* is a common Name to all. The very *Poor do disuse Intreaties.* There's no *Voice*,

but is turned to *Clamour*; *Railing* is our *Rhetorick*, *Brawling* our *Eloquence*. What *Tongue* is not a *Sword?* Whose *Lips* be not *Spears*, in our Militant State? There's *no Strife* in *Heaven*; and there is *little beside* upon this *Earth*.

Nor can ever *Grapes* be expected from *Thorns*, or *Figs* from *Thistles*. I am not going to *Prune* them, and *Dig* about them, with such an Expectation. *Wickedness will proceed from the Wicked*; and *must* so do. But *Vines* there be, that would yield better Fruit, if we could take the *Foxes*, the *little Foxes* that spoil them. *Good Men* have an Internal *Treasure*, whence they might bring forth good Things; and with ease enough, were but *the Thieves that break in and steal*, expelled. These *Branches* (broke off the Tree whereon they grew; the Sermon, in which they were born) are designed for *Rods*, to whip those thievish *Buyers and Sellers out of the* said *Temples*. Ill Men are *Dunghils*; and

and Good Ones are *Temples*; in *Chriſtian* Divinity and very *Pagan*, they are ſo.

But ſcarcely ſhall I Forgive my ſelf, if I waſte my Time in *Complaints*: Or in telling what I deſign to do, otherwiſe than by doing it. Wherefore (being δεῖ πρωτῶς ἐξετάζειν, &c.) a ſhort *Paragraph* ſhall uſher in my *twenty four Directions*.

By *Forgiving* Enemies, I mean, *Turning from Endeavour and from Deſire to do them Hurt, unto Readineſs to do them Good, as Opportunity ſerves.* Unto which we are obliged, whether our Pardon be craved or no. A *Man* is ſtill to be loved as a *Man*, and a *Kinſman* as a *Kinſman*; Penitent or Impenitent. I do not by *Forgiving* here intend, ſo much as *Reſtoring them into former Eſteem and Intimacy.* No faithful *Church* will ſo reſtore any *ſcandalous Member*; nor any *wiſe Man*, ſo reſtore an *injurious Offender*, before his tho-

thorough Repentance credibly profeſſed. *Honour*, and *Love of this ſort* depend on Mens *Innocence* and *Repentance*. Now,

Unto *the firſt kind of Forgiving*, an untoward Heart ſeems eaſily brought, by telling it ſelf as follows. Twelve Particulars concerning the *Duty* it ſelf, and *Twelve* more concerning the *Perſon* on whom it is incumbent.

Concerning the Duty, ſeriouſly tell thy ſelf to this Effect.

1. *It is my Duty. Therefore I will Forgive.* If it be not *a Duty*, where is God's Authority? He Commands it. If it be not *my Duty*, I muſt not be God's Subject. For his Law binds all his Subjects. If I do not Forgive my Enemy, I deny my God. But, *How can I do this Evil?* Gen. 39. 9.

2. *It is my* DIFFICULT *Duty. Therefore I will induſtriouſly Forgive.* Not with a Forgiveneſs that ſhall coſt me

me nothing. I will go to the Expence of much Pains for it. Though I am *glued* to my Wrath, I will *tear* my ſelf from it: And with ſtrong Cries pray *Almightineſs* to bring me to *brotherly Kindneſs*. Labour in Duty is never loſt. That which *requires* it moſt, *requiteth* it beſt. Wherefore, *My Heart ſhall ſtir me up, my Spirit ſhall make me willing*, though it find me not ſo, *Exod.* 35. 21.

3. *It is my* EQUITABLE *Duty. Therefore I will Forgive without grudging.* What more Equal? If God will Revenge my Injurer, What need I wiſh him Evil? If God will Reward me, how juſt is it that I *obey* his Command, and render an evil Man Good for Evil? If others be bound to forgive me, as righteouſly I am bound to forgive them. 'Tis a plain Caſe; I am in *Bedlam* as long as I am in a *vindictive Paſſion*. Return O my Reaſon, and let me do my moſt *reaſonable Service*, Rom. 12. 1.

4. *It*

4. *It is a Duty of my own* COMMANDING. *Therefore for very shame I will Forgive.* Alas, I charge my Children to forgive each other's Wrongs; and still leave it to me to right them. Do I look that my *Wormship* should be observed more than my Creator's *Godhead?* Or, Dream I that my Power is more Soveraign over my Babes, than his over me and my Passions? With what Face can I answer it, *Thou that preacheſt and commandeſt a Man, ſhould not hate his Enemies, doſt thou hate thine?* Rom. 2. 21.

5. *It is a Duty most* GLORIOUS. *Therefore I will ambitiouſly Forgive.* Wherein is God himſelf more Glorious, than in letting go his Anger? *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity?* Mich. 7. 18. Fools think it *ignoble* to digeſt *Injury.* But be it ever my Motto, what the wiſe Man writes; *It is the Glory of a Man to paſs over a Tranſgreſſion,* Prov. 19. 11. To Forgive a malicious Wrong, is to put on a very glorious Crown.

6. *It*

6. *It is my* BENEFICIAL *Duty. Therefore I will covetously Forgive.* More is got by true Forgiving *one Trespass*, than by Receiving *many a Kindness*. Are the King's Dominions worth an Evidence for Heaven? Forgiving an Injury is a good Evidence; it is so, if Christ's be a good Authority. *If you forgive Men their Trespasses, your Heavenly Father will forgive you*, Mat. 6. 14. O my Soul, have a respect to this Recompence of Reward.

7. *It is my* FREQUENT *Duty. Therefore I will Forgive, or desire to learn to Forgive.* Injuries be not rare, as *Thunder*; but common as *Day-light*. And they must be Remitted, or God must be Denied. I had need learn therefore very *perfectly*, what I am to do *daily*. But (ἃ μανθάνομεν ποιεῖν ποιοῦντες μανθάνομεν) what we would learn to do, by doing it we must learn. I will Forgive, to perfect me in Forgiving; as Children write, to perfect them in Writing. I will *abound in this Work of the Lord, that I may*

get

get from strength to strength in it, Psal. 84. 7. God rewards Grace with Grace, *Psal.* 119. 55, 56.

8. *It is my VOWED Duty. Therefore I will Forgive in the dread of Perjury.* Constructively, was I sworn in my *holy Baptism*; and so have I been at the *Holy Supper*, full often, to Forgive my Trespassers. Wherefore, *Having Vowed unto God, I will not delay to pay it*, Eccles. 5. 4.

9. *It is my CONSOLATIVE Duty. Therefore I will, for Comfort's sake, Forgive.* Never, never, never, do God above, Men below, and Conscience within, speak more kindly, than when we do Forgive most eminently. If ever, then it's said as unto *Abraham*, *Now I know thou fearest God*, Gen. 22. 12. Ordinarily more sensible Comfort is given in the Remission of one Injury, than in hearing of seven Sermons.

10. *It*

10. *It is my* DEFENSIVE *Duty.* Therefore I will *Forgive, were it but to ſilence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men.* By this Duty, I ſingularly Convince profane Men, that I am acted by a Spirit much better than theirs. *This Good overcomes their Evil,* quencheth their Wildfires; and ſometimes extorteth their Praiſe of Religion. Speak Experience! This *Wiſdom is a great Defence,* Eccleſ. 7. 12.

11. *It is my* FAITH-EXERCISING *Duty. Therefore I will Forgive, to Keep my Faith in Action.* Faith's *exerciſe,* is Faith's *encreaſe.* And to good purpoſe is it exerciſed in Forgiving. A Duty, we can do nothing of, till Faith come and ſhows us; that, whatever the Wrong be that's done us, it was ordered *by God's Providence*; and we ſhall be benefited by it *through his Grace.* A Duty, then indeed eaſy. *David* can then bear *Shimei*'s Curſing, when Faith ſays, that *God bid him.* And we, as he, uſe to be Dumb and Calm, when Faith ſaith of a bitter Event,

Event, *God did it.* Then we can tell our Enemies, as *Joseph* his Brethren; *It was not you that VVronged us.* Gen. 45. 8.

12. *It is but my MOMENTANT Duty. Therefore I will thankfully Forgive.* What, can I not have Patience, one short Vapor's continuance! My Life's no longer in the *Trespassing World.* And in *Heaven,* there will be no Wrongs done me. I shall love my self, no better than every one will Love me there. At the Judgment Day, if my Trespassers Repent not before, it will be my *Duty* and *Privilege* to laugh at their Calamity, and mock when their Fear comes. It is certain, *The Saints shall Judg the World,* 1 Cor. 6. 2.

Concerning thy self, speak on to this purpose.

1. *Thousands and ten Thousands of God's Pardons have I needed, and daily need. Therefore I will Forgive.* Multiplied Pardons hold me out of Hell; to

to Pardon will I ever multiply, therefore. Lest God say to me, *O thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all that Debt, shouldest not thou have had compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had pity on thee?* Mat. 18. 32, 33.

2. *I have and shall ever need abundance of Mens Forgiveness. Therefore I will Forgive.* O my Soul, *Take no heed unto all words that are spoken. For, oftentimes thine own Heart knoweth, that thou thy self hast Cursed others.* Eccles. 7. 21, 22.

3. *I have my Self, times without number, Wronged my own Soul. Therefore I will Forgive.* No Man, no Devil, hath had the Power, *so much* to injure me, as I have my self, injured my self. And what can I love an *injurious self*, and not an *injurious Neighbour?* There be thousands of Motives to forgive the worst Enemies, in that one Text, *He that Sinneth, wrongeth his own Soul.* Prov. 8. 36.

4. *I shall Sin on against God, against Men, and against my own Soul, if I do not Forgive every Enemy I have. Therefore I will Forgive.* Horror, where art thou? come seize me, in the thought of Renouncing God, enraging Men, murdering my own Soul! The Question is a Thunderbolt; *After thy hardness and impenitent Heart, treasurest thou up unto thy self Wrath, against the Day of Wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God?* Rom. 2. 5.

5. *I shall raze God's Image out of my Soul, and print the Devil's Image upon it, if I do not Forgive. Therefore I will Forgive.* My Saviour tells me I must Forgive, that I may be *like my Father in Heaven*, Matth. 5. 45. And his Apostle tells me, I must *not let the Sun go down upon my Wrath*, [my Unforgiving Wrath] *lest I give place* [or entertainment] *to the Devil.* Ephes. 4. 26, 27. What then, shall I say in the Language of Practice, *I will not be like God, I will be like the Devil?* God forbid.

6. *I*

6. *I must not Pray with any hope of God's granting my Prayer, if I do not Forgive. Therefore I will Forgive.* In *Nature*, I can't Live without Breathing, nor in *Grace* without Praying. But, if no Forgiving, there is no Praying. There is no right *Lifting up of the holiest Hands, but without VVrath*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. Christ's Rule for Prayer is utterly broke by the least Unforgiving Anger. Vainly I bow my Knees, if I do not Forgive my Enemies. And vainly, and worse I Live, if I do not Pray. If I were never to pray any more, I were better Live no more: Yea, though I sunk into the Lake of Fire. But, My Saviour is express, *If you forgive not Men, neither will your Father forgive your Trespasses.* Matth. 6. 15.

7. *I must not come to the Lord's Table, unless I Forgive. Therefore I will Forgive.* Fearful! Fearful! What shall I be kept away as a Dog, from the Table of my Lord? Yes: For, *if I have not Charity, I am Nothing.* 1 Cor. 13.

2, 3, 7. And who will admit to the *Holy Feast*, a Wretch that hath nothing appearing of the *Holy Spirit*? As long as I am Unreconciled to Men, I am excommunicated from the gracious Presence of God. But forbid, good God, that it should be said of my Person, *Purge out that old (sowr) Leaven, that ye may be a new Lump*, (a Holy Society)! 1 *Cor.* 5. 7.

8. *I shall not be able to Hear the Word of God with hope of Profit, if I do not Forgive. Therefore I will Forgive.* Wo is me! I cannot look to have *God* to be my *Saviour*, if his *Word* be not *his Power to my Salvation.* But, for ought I see, his Word is not likely to save any Soul, save such as do *receive it with Meekness.* That is, with an humble submissive frame of Spirit. *Jam.* 1. 21. But where is my *Meekness*, when God, Men and my own Heart see my *Stubborness*? And my *Implacableness* saith in the Language of Practice, "If "God will teach none but *meek Sin-* "*ners*, I will be none of his *Scholars*! while

while I am so Cross, I am plainly under God's Curse. But I do not Submit to my *God*, if I do not Remit all whom he commands me.

9. *I shall not be taken into the Company of any good and wise Man, if I do not Forgive. Therefore I will Forgive.* 'Tis Hell upon Earth to be in ill Company: 'tis the Curse of Curses therefore, to be cast off by good Company. But what a word is that, *Make no friendship with an ANGRY Man,* [or an Unforgiving one;] *and with a FURIOUS Man thou shalt not go,* [thou shalt not Converse with him;] *Lest thou learn his Ways, and get a Snare to thy Soul.* Prov. 22. 24, 25. What remains then, but that I resolve to forgive *every Enemy*, or Live without *one Friend?* For till I do forgive, *God*, *Angels* and *Saints* turn from me. And I have only the *Devil*, and his *ill Men* and *Angels* for my Company. Well, if it were but for the company of God's Servants, I would put up a thousand Affronts.

10. *I shall Sin wilfully, and not of Infirmity, if I do not Forgive. Therefore I will Forgive.* O what is all Sin? but of all, of what a Crimson die is *wilful* Sin? Now, let me think; I am *Unregenerate*, or *Regenerate*. If *Unregenerate*, such Mens *Unableness* to obey God, is certainly, their *Unwillingness*. Their *Impotence* is a *Moral* one. But, if I am *Regenerate*, 'tis sure, *I am able to overcome Evil with Good.*

In first Conversion, the holy Spirit giveth an ability to obey all God's Commands within Sincerity that shall be accepted; that through the Grace of the New Covenant, shall be accepted. I believe that Text; *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World*; i. e. the World's Temptations to disobey God. 1 *John* 5. 4. A wilful Sinner, is the Devil's liveliest Picture!

11. *I shall either Convert my Enemies, or be Rewarded of God for endeavouring it, if I do Forgive them. There-*

fore

fore I will Forgive. To Convert *one Soul*, is more than to save the Lives of all *the Bodies* in this World. And to Forgive an Injurious Man's Sin, is a direct means to convert his Soul: At least, to endear him; and so make him Attentive, and Flexible, to my Counsels for his Salvation. O that *Rom.* 12. 20. were duly studied! But, what if my Kindness doth not Convert my Enemy? Will not God accept my good Will, Yes; he will reward it, and praise it. He will say to me, as he did to *David*, *For as much as it was in thine Heart,——thou didst well that it was in thine Heart.* 2 Chron. 6. 8.

12. *I shall not be able to rest in all other possible Evidences for Heaven, if this one of Forgiving my Enemies be wanting.* Therefore I will Forgive. Miserable is every *Life on Earth*, that is without *Evidences for Heaven.* But imperfect are all Evidences, and *Undemonstrative*, if this indispensable one, be missing. Let me be ever of his Mind, who was a Man after God's

own Heart; So let me think as he thought and ſpoke; *Then ſhall I not be Aſhamed when I have reſpect to all thy Commandments*, Pſal. 119. 6. All the Evidences that can be heaped together will ſignify little in a dying Hour; unleſs Conſcience telleth us, that we have been like *Zacharias* and his Wife; *Righteous before God, walking in All the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs*. Luke 1. 6.

I will conclude with *Apoſtolical Balſam*. So will I name St. *Paul's* deſcription of *Charity*. Bleſſed Dr. *Manton* hath left a *Sermon* of it; I preſent but a ſhort *Gloſs*. And wiſh that it be not more than will be *Applicatively* read. I have made my *Pages* ſo *Few*, that *Readers* might be many.

Sweet Love! whither art thou fled? Return, return thou *bleſſed of the Lord*, return, return, and *bleſs* us! Thus the *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. 13.

Charity

Charity ſuffereth long. A Charitable Man is not a *Waſp*. When he is Injured, he does not preſently put forth his Sting; but waits for two things, for his Enemies *Repentance*, and for his own *Deliverance*. Our Saviour received the worſt of Provocations, but never gave one ill Word for them.

Charity is Kind. A Charitable Man forbears doing Evil, and is Forward to do Good. He not only *Stabs* not, but he *Salutes* diſobliging Creatures. Not only *Starves* them not, but *Feeds* them, yea Feaſts them.

Charity Envieth not. A Charitable Man hath not the Spirit of *Cain*. He ſaith, as the *Baptiſt* of old, when occaſion is; *I muſt Decreaſe, and this Man muſt Increaſe*. His Eye is not Evil, becauſe God's is Good. He is not made Sick, to ſee any Man made Well.

Charity Vaunteth not it self. A Charitable Man abhors *Ostentation.* He allows not himself to let forth his own, and to call for other Mens *Vices*, with the Sound of his *Vertues*. They that needlesly *raise* themselves, do *irritate* others. But he takes no Praise but to give it unto God.

Charity is not puffed up. A Charitable Man is not incident into the *Tympany*. He knows a Knowledg that pulleth down, from Pride and Scorn of any Men. He knows, it is rare that the *best Man* is not in some Vertue, *inferior* to him whom he Contemns.

Charity behaves not it self Unseemly. A Charitable Man is a *Modest* one. He is ashamed of offensive Words, and very Looks; Deeds, and very Habits or Dresses of his Body. The divine Charge [*whatsoever things are Lovely, think on these*] runneth in his Mind.

Charity seeks not her own. A Charitable Man is not like a *VVen*, that draws

draws all to it self. He *seeks* not his own Interest, so as to *Neglect* others. He so cares for his own *Cabin*, as to wish very well to the whole Ship.

Charity is not easily Provoked. A Charitable Man, can be *Angry and not Sin.* Be *Hot*, and not in a *Fever*, Be *Warm*, and not *Boil* so as to let Scum run over. When Necessitated to Anger, he Tempers the Fire with holy Water. He's a Man of broader Nostrils than his Neighbours. And neither takes he Anger so soon, or Keeps it so long as others.

Charity thinketh no Evil. A Charitable Man *Plots* none. And what is more, he is not hasty to *impute* any. He suspects no Evil, if he can find a sense that is Good, in which to take Mens Words and Works. Yea, where he sees Evil, he doth not as a *Vixon*, brawl and upbraid with Outrage; exclaiming of more than he sees.

Charity

Charity rejoiceth not in Evil. A Charitable Man is sorry for all Evil under the Sun. For the Evil of *Doing*, and the Evil of *Suffering*. Revenge is others Meat and Sauce; but 'tis his Wormwood and Poison.

Charity rejoiceth in the Truth. [or the Sincerity of Goodness in any.] A Charitable Man, welcomes the News of Goodness in any, and of Goodness unto any one. He is of that Countrey, where they all Love one another as themselves.

Charity beareth all things, [Covereth all.] A Charitable Man, hides all the Faults, that he can without Sin and Faultiness. He is the most forward to confess his own, and to cover others Infirmities.

Charity believeth all things. A Charitable Man, Credits all *good* Reports, as readily as all *Evil* ones; when they are not prevalently contradicted. Of things

things apparently Falſe, Belief is as Impoſſible as Unjuſt.

Charity endureth all things. A Charitable Man puts up all Wrongs done unto himſelf. Rather than not be *Kind* to his Enemy, he will make it ſaid that he is not *Juſt* to himſelf. Whatever he can let go unpuniſhed, without breach of Law; he will non-ſuit without breach of's Peace.

Charity never fails. A Charitable Man, ſhall *Eternally* hold his Love of God and Men. His Love of both, ſhall Live in *Heaven* as on *Earth.* It ſhall ever *Grow* here, and *Flouriſh* for ever there.

May I ſhut up with the ſtupendous practice of *David's* memorable Piety; and our *Saviour's* rebuke of his Diſciples Wrath, though it ſeemed very Pious. The *firſt* is Pſal. 35. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Falſe witneſſes did riſe up, they laid to my Charge things that I knew not. They rewarded*

rewarded me Evil for Good, to the ſpoiling of my Soul. But as for me, when they were Sick, my clothing was Sackcloth: I humbled my Soul with Faſting, and my Prayer returned into mine own Boſom. I behaved my Self as though he had been my Friend, or Brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that Mourneth for his Mother. The *next* is, Luke 9. 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56. *And it came to paſs, when the time was come, that he ſhould be received up, he ſtedfaſtly ſet his Face to go to* Jeruſalem. *And ſent Meſſengers before his Face, and they went, and entred into a Village of the* Samaritans *to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, becauſe his Face was as though he would go to* Jeruſalem. *And when his Diſciples* James *and* John *ſaw this, they ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven, and conſume them even as* Elias *did? But he turned and rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy Mens Lives, but to ſave them. And they went to another Village.*

Reader,

Reader, farewel! *Superfluous Books*, and indeed *additions to that heap of our Vanities*, which needs them not. Whether this be such, I am content that thou be the Judg, if thou wilt but first remember Dr. *Hammond*'s memorable Words; " *Of all Errors and Ignorances* " *there are none ſo Worthy of our Pains* " *to Cure, or Caution to Prevent, as* " *thoſe that have* [moſt] *influence on* " *Practice.* I add thoſe of Mr. *Howe* wherewith he ſhuts up his Treatiſe of the Carnality of Religious Contention. Words moſt worthy of aweful Memory. " *Do we think we ſhall carry* " *Strife to Heaven, Envyings, Heart-* " *burnings, Animoſities, Enmities, Ha-* " *tred; ſhall we carry theſe to Heaven* " *with us? Let us labour to diveſt our* " *ſelves, and ſtrike off from our Spirits,* " *every thing that cannot go with us* " *thither.* Now,

The God of Love and Peace, make our *Chriſtian Societies* leſs like unto *Mahometan Janizaries!* And *every one that*

that nameth the Name of Christ, to *follow after Peace!* And, to be Kind one to another, tender-hearted, FORGIVING one another, even as God for Christ's sake, forgiveth them! *Amen*, and *Amen*.

FINIS.